Decline in Exports

2475. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian exports were down by 2.3 per cent in January 2000;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) what remedial steps Government intend to take to check such slide?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics provisional data the exports have shown a decline of 2.3 per cent in US $ terms in January 2000 over the corresponding figure of January 1999. Factors like the port strike during this month have partly contributed to this slide.

(c) A number of steps have been taken to further enhance the export growth which include setting up of Special Economic Zones, reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation, simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the recently announced Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions.

Export of Floriculture and Horticulture items

2476. SHRI LAJPAT RAI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the details of countries to which floriculture and horticulture items are being exported from India, particularly from Punjab at present;

(b) whether West-Asian and European Countries are the main markets for above said items;

(c) if so the total quantity of floriculture and horticulture items exported to those countries during each of the last three years;

(d) whether there is a vast scope to export above items from Punjab; and

(e) if so, the steps taken to increase export of these items during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) West Asian and European countries are the main markets for horticulture and floriculture items from India. Floriculture items are exported mainly to Australia, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, UAE, UK and USA and horticulture items such as fruits and vegetables are mainly exported to Bahrain, Kuwait, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Germany, UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Hongkong, Canada, USA, Bangladesh and Srilanka. Information on details of exports is from Punjab is not available as State-wise export Statistics are not maintained.

(c) The quantity and value of exports to West Asia and European markets of horticulture items such as fruits and vegetables and the value of floriculture exports during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 for which full details are available are given below. In the case of floriculture items uniform statistics of quantity are not available.

Exports of Fruits and Vegetables :

(Quantity: '000 M.Tons Value : Rs. crores)

Year	West Asia		Europe	
	Quantity	value	Quantity	Value
1996-97	249.6	311.88	73.2	262.72
1997-98	249.6	362.68	96.1	324.47
1998-99	NA	364.53	NA	352.08

Exports of Floriculture items :

(value : Rs. Crores)

Year	West Asia	Europe
	Value	value
1996-97	1.59	30.16
1997-98	2.32	43.61
1998-99	2.48	46.27

(d) There is a limited scope for export of horticulture items such as kinnows from Punjab.

(e) The steps taken to increase the production and export of horticulture and floriculture products during the Ninth Plan include :

(i) Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical know-how of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Development of Tropical, Temperate and Arid Zone fruits;

(ii) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, and strengthening of quality control including installation of latest ISO 9000/HACCP equipments at export units;

(iii) Grant of air freight subsidy for export of selected fresh vegetables and fresh fruits and floriculture products.

(iv) Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially mangoes in overseas markets. Research efforts are on for the use of modern technologies such as Controlled/Modified atmosphere technologies in transportation for increasing the shelf-life of perishable products;

(v) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions;

(vi) Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables;

(vii) Providing technical advisory services and other support services to, trade and industry including training of farmers for export production, quality control packaging, transport, etc.